

Digestive Dilemmas No More

Easy tips for digestive health.

Firmiana Egan, LMT

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I DEDICATE THIS BOOK TO ALL OF MY
FAMILY AND FRIENDS;

THANK YOU FOR THE SUPPORT AND
ENCOURAGEMENT.

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**NOTE TO READERS; I TRULLY HOPE
THE INFORMATION IN THIS BOOK
OFFERS RELIEF TO YOUR DIGESTIVE
DILEMMA. PLEASE REMEMBER THAT
GREAT DIGESTIVE HEALTH TAKES TIME,
IT DOES NOT HAPPEN OVER NIGHT. I
WISH IT DID THOUGH!**

MY JOURNEY TOWARD DIGESTIVE HEALTH

My journey into the world was not a smooth event! I was born with colic. The symptoms of colic are intense gas, abdominal pain, and crying that can last three hours a day, three days a week, for three weeks or longer. I remember my mother telling me that she had tried everything the doctors told her to do when I was screaming my head off--massaging my stomach and giving me chamomile tea. But nothing worked and she felt helpless. When I heard this story, I gave my mother a big hug and thanked her for her love, compassion, and patience because, if that had been me, I would have gone crazy.

The cause of colic is unknown, and it's still unclear why some babies have colic and others don't.

I remember talking with my mother when I was 30 about my constipation issues. She shared with me that generations upon generations of our family members have had digestive issues, especially constipation. My great grandmother, grandmother, great uncle, mother, and aunt, all on my mother's side of the family, all suffered from digestive disorders. I thought, it's no wonder that I'm not a smooth mover. I was born into a family with generations of totally defective digestive systems.

I know that my constipation began by the age of 5 but may have started much earlier.

I remember a day when I was 5 or so, going to the bathroom, sitting on the toilet, pushing as hard as I could, and feeling the pain that I always felt as I tried to force a bowel movement. I thought this was normal. I thought everybody had constipation.

When I was 21, I moved to the island of Maui from the city of Los Angeles. Moving to Maui ranks with finding love and healing my

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severe constipation as the defining events of my life. Living on Maui inspires me to care for myself, others, and the environment.

On Maui I had my first massage and found my calling--massaging people in a beautiful resort on the ocean. I became a licensed massage therapist, and I work at a high-end resort in the middle of the Pacific Ocean. Being a massage therapist has exposed me to all sorts of alternative ways to care for and heal the body.

At 25, I was still constipated but not as badly as when I was a child. I decided to seek help from a well-known doctor on the island who was educated in alternative medicine as well as traditional medicine.

Meeting with Dr. Joel Friedman was a complete eye-opener. He asked me questions about my diet, my emotions, my relationships with myself and others. He looked inside my mouth to see if I had metal in my teeth. He ordered three tests--a hair analysis, a urine analysis, and a stool analysis.

When we met to discuss the test results, Dr. Friedman said that I must get all the metal out of my teeth as soon as possible because I had severe heavy metal poisoning. He could not believe that I was functioning as well as I was. He told me that normal levels are in the range of 1-2; my level was 70.

Dr. Friedman also told me that I had candida--a fungal infection throughout my body that was compromising my health in many ways I was completely unaware of. He said that getting rid of candida when you have heavy metal poisoning is challenging, even impossible.

So I hustled off to the dentist to get that metal out of my teeth and then consulted Dr. Friedman on treating the candida. He sent me home with an antifungal prescription, a bottle of liquid minerals, probiotics, and orders to stop eating sugar and wheat. What? No sugar? No pizza? But, as my girlfriend said, "You just got to put on your big girl panties and power up!" So began my journey toward

smooth moving.

Now I want to share with you my lessons learned and techniques perfected as I resolved my constipation issues. You too can become a smooth mover.

I am not an MD. I did not write this book as a substitute for the medical advice of physicians. Everyone should consult a physician on health issues, particularly any symptoms that might require diagnosis or medical attention. I have made every effort to present information correct at the time of writing and editing the text, but I cannot assume any liability for any loss, damage, or disruption caused by errors and omissions.

DIGESTION DEMYSTIFIED

“A person is as old as their digestive system.”

Ayurvedic wisdom

Sometimes I feel very old indeed. I love food and even knowingly eat foods that will upset my body, as my digestive system is quick to tell me. As I sit on the toilet, hugging my stomach and straining to poop, my body scolds me, “You didn’t learn the last time you ate deep fried mac and cheese, did you?” Then I tell myself, “REMEMBER; don’t forget how bad your body felt.” Some days I’m better at remembering than others, and some days I choose to ignore my reality.

Most people can relate to this story. Most people indulge, at least occasionally, in emotion-driven eating, despite the consequences to the body. As one friend says, “I happily have memory loss when it comes to food.” Only one of my friends sticks to a disciplined diet because, she says, she really doesn’t like food very much. I ask, how is that possible?

But now, at age 40, I’m managing my food intake much better. Most days, as I decide what and when to eat, I think about the impact of my choices on my ability to have a smooth bowel movement. Of course, I still sometimes throw caution to the winds. I don’t want to be perfect--too much work and too little fun.

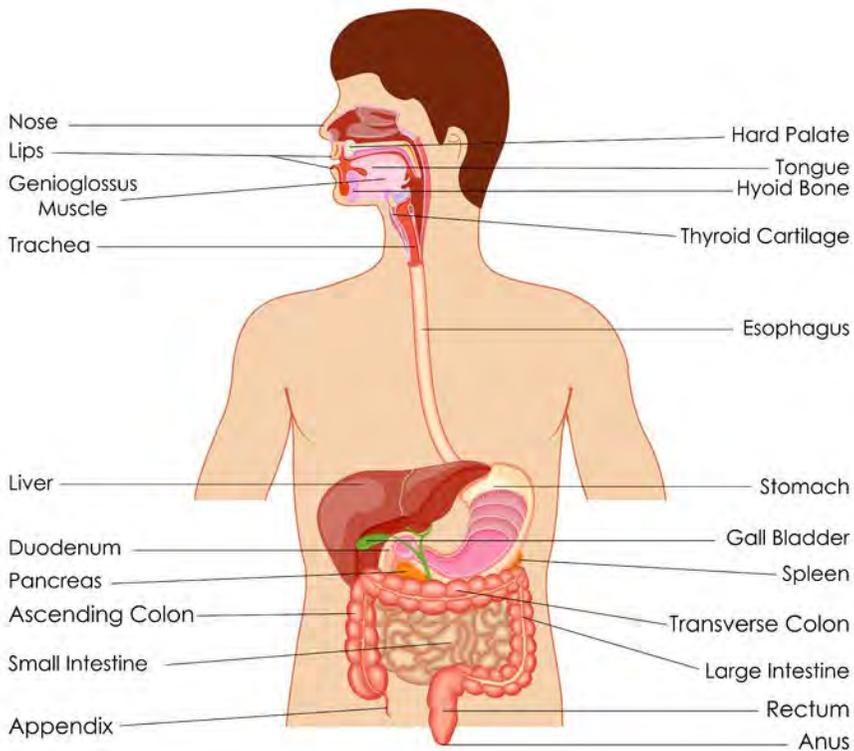
The Anatomy of Digestion

I have found that understanding the complex system our bodies use to process food automatically can inspire us to be more disciplined

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about what we ask it to process. So here is a crash course in the anatomy of digestion.

Digestion has two main functions—to convert food into nutrients that the body needs and to rid the body of waste that it does not need. The digestive system (also called the digestive tract) that performs these functions is an impressive 30 feet long.



Digestive System

The mouth launches digestion with the first bite of food, as chewing breaks food down into more easily digested pieces.

The salivary glands produce saliva that helps keep the mouth and other parts of the digestive system moist. Amylase, a digestive enzyme in the saliva begins to break down carbohydrates (sugar and

starches)

The esophagus is the muscular tube that connects the throat to the stomach. This tube is about 8 inches long. .

The stomach partially digests food. The churning action of the stomach muscles breaks down the food. The stomach releases acids and enzymes that break food down chemically. The enzyme pepsin (not Pepsi) breaks down protein.

The liver filters the blood coming from the digestive tract before passing it to the rest of the body. The liver detoxifies chemicals and metabolizes drugs. It secretes bile, a digestive enzyme that ends up in the intestines and makes proteins important for blood clotting and other functions.

The gall bladder stores and concentrates the bile produced by the liver. The bile further breaks down food.

The pancreas produces enzymes and hormones that help break down food.

The small intestine, which is about 20 feet long and about 1 inch in diameter, absorbs most of the nutrients consumed in food and drink.

The large intestine (or colon), which is about 5 feet long and 3 inches in diameter, absorbs water, creating a stool. As the stool enters the rectum, nerves there create the urge to poop.

The rectum, which begins at the end of the large intestine and ends at the anus is a temporary storage place for poop before it is expelled through the anus.

The anus is the opening where poop leaves the body.

The Journey Through the Digestive System

To understand how this complex system works in practical terms, consider the journey of pizza, my favorite food, through the

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digestive system. I eat a slice of pepperoni pizza that is cheesy and greasy, just the way I love it. As I begin chewing, saliva is mixing with the food, the starches break down, and digestion begins. The partially digested pizza goes down the food tube (the esophagus) into the stomach. The upper muscle relaxes to let the food enter, and the lower muscle mixes the food with digestive juices called *stomach acids*, breaking down proteins to produce *chyme*, the paste that results from mixing food with gastric juices. This chyme paste enters the small intestine.

The small intestine is anything but small. It is the size of a tennis court. This is where the movement (peristalsis) begins and where most digestion and absorption of nutrients in the pizza happen. The muscles of the small intestine mix the chyme with digestive juices from the pancreas and liver and then push the mixture forward for further digestion. The walls of the small intestine absorb the digested nutrients into the bloodstream. The blood delivers the nutrients to the rest of the body.

Meanwhile, the much smaller large intestine absorbs water and any remaining nutrients and transforms the waste from liquid into stool. The rectum stores the stool until the time comes to push it out of the body during a bowel movement through the anus.

A remarkable journey of transformation.

PERFECT POOPING

“If you do not take care of your body, where are you going to live?”

Unknown

As chapter 1 showed, bowel movements are an essential way for the body to eliminate waste. A stool is about 75% water. The rest is dead bacteria that helped digest food, living bacteria, protein, undigested food residue, fiber from food waste, cellular lining, fats, salts, and substances released from the liver, and intestinal mucus.

Daily pooping is critical to health and well-being. Some experts believe that what drops into the toilet is a powerful indicator of a person's health. I think of the scene in the 1987 movie, “The Last Emperor of China, “ where the Emperor's caregiver smelled and looked at the Emperor's poop and diagnosed what to feed him and how to treat him.

Poop is quite literally a big part of life. The average person produces 9,000 pounds of poop over their lifetime. For every foot of the colon, the body can store 5-10 pounds of poop. The ascending colon controls the aging process in the body.

As a child, I saw some of Eddie Murphy's stand-up comedy and remember him admitting that, when he was a child, he told jokes about pooping because he got lots of laughs. But this is serious stuff. I have spent years discovering what foods will help me move smoothly and what foods will give me gas and make me feel bloated. I definitely see strong correlations between food and poop habits. In my 15-year quest to perfect my pooping skills, I have experimented with everything from diets, to specific foods, exercise regimes, detox programs, colonics, and emotional healing. I have

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sought advice from alternative, holistic, and traditional doctors. I believe that I have found what works for me, and I want to share some of what I have learned in this chapter.

Healthy Colon, Healthy Body

Functional medicine sees the digestive system as the core of health—with good reason. The vagus nerve (the 10th cranial nerve that runs from the brain to the abdomen) creates a “brain-gut axis.” This strong, direct connection leads some to call the gut the second brain. The gut is where 60-80% of the immune system resides and where 90% of neurotransmitters (chemical responses that regulate mood) like serotonin are made.

Digestive system problems can cause temporary upset like gas or constipation and chronic health problems.

As Donna Gates, creator of the Body Ecology Diet, says, “If you want to improve the overall health of your body, then you must begin by improving the health of your colon.” Here are important signs of a healthy colon:

- Clear skin without blemishes
- Mild-smelling breath
- Daily elimination, with a large bowel movement in the morning and a smaller bowel movement later in the day
- Elimination time of 18-24 hours
- No mucous, partially digested food, or blood in the stool
- Soft, well-formed stools, usually 12-18 inches long, often shaped like a torpedo, and easy to pass.

Our stools have been classified into 7 types.

Type 1 and 2 means you are constipated!



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Type 4 signals a healthy colon most strongly.

Type 5, 6, and 7 ,blobs, fluff, and brown liquid means it is on it's way-or is- diarrhea.

Tips for More Perfect Pooping



Think position and massage.

Position. In 2003, a group of scientists conducted a study involving 28 people. The participants were supposed to poop in three positions—sitting on a low toilet, sitting on a high toilet, and squatting. The scientists concluded that pooping was easier and faster and required less strain when people assumed a natural squatting position required less strain.



Stomach massage. Massaging the stomach for a few minutes before getting out of bed in the morning can help poop advance from the large intestine to the anus. The massage motion should move clockwise. Massaging the stomach can have a calming effect on the entire midsection, home to some priceless organs, and can ease tightness in the lower back.

Pooping Fact or Fiction?

The answer is not always clear-cut.

Healthy people can poop just several times a week. Some doctors consider pooping three times a week normal. I totally disagree. Here is my litmus test. If I don't poop at least once a day, I feel bad and the opposite of perky. This is an easy self-diagnostic for everyone. Many experts recommend pooping after every meal like a puppy or an infant.

Holding your poop is unhealthy. Holding your poop isn't very comfortable, but occasionally holding it won't damage the body.

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However, frequent holding can cause constipation or dysfunction in the muscles used for pooping, according to Dr. Raymond.

Poop should smell bad. Dr. Patricia Raymond, a gastroenterologist and associate professor of clinical internal medicine at Eastern Virginia Medical School, says to expect the smell to change depending on the foods eaten. No matter what, poop is going to stink. Dr. Raymond says the smell changes with diet. The more veggies, the less smell. “Herbivore leavings smell much better than a carnivore’s,” says Raymond. If poop goes from kind of smelly to unbearable, digestion of food may not be working properly.

Cleaning the colon is good. Dr. Raymond believes in leaving the colon alone, unless there is a medical reason for intervening, to avoid depleting the stores of good bacteria. While I agree that cleaning out the colon depletes bacteria, most colon cleanses return good bacteria to the body. I think of a colon cleanse as giving myself an internal flush. A useful analogy might be giving the car oil and filter changes. Without them the car will not function properly and will require some expensive repairs.

White foods can help with diarrhea. Dr. Raymond knows of no proven diet to help with diarrhea. She advocates the oral rehydration formula of the World Health Organization—1 liter of water mixed with 6 teaspoons of sugar and 1/2 teaspoon of salt and sipped throughout the day.

Healthy poop does not make a splash. A smooth bowel movement should not make a splash. It should glide into the water.

A stool should float, rather than sink. Donna Gates believes that a floating stool indicates that the body is not digesting fats well. Green or white clay-colored stool may signal that the liver or the gallbladder is under stress. Patricia Raymond, MD, FAGG, a gastroenterologist and associate professor of clinical internal medicine at Eastern Virginia Medical School, says that regular floaters may be a sign of improper absorption of fats and oils. “If

you eat something that causes a lot of gas, it will float.” Make an appointment with a gastroenterologist.

Poop should be brown. Doctors do not like to see red (unless cherries or beets were on the menu), purple, or black, says Dr. Raymond.

Imperfect Pooping: Constipation

“I wish that being famous helped prevent me from being constipated.”
Marvin Gaye

Constipation comes from the Latin word *constipare* which means “to crowd together.”

The IBS Treatment Center in Santa Monica California defines constipation in terms of two factors—frequency of bowel movements and their firmness. Bowel movements that are difficult to pass, very firm, or consisting of small rabbit-like pellets qualify as constipation. Dr. Joseph Mercola, a leading proponent of alternative medicine and osteopathic physician, defines constipation as passing hard, dry stools that a person strains to move and having fewer than three bowel movements a week.

I suffered my first major bout of constipation when I was 12 or 13 years old, when eating right and drinking water were not part of my agenda. I remember sitting on the toilet pushing with all my might, but nothing happened. I felt a hard mass needing to come out, but it wouldn’t budge. Finally, I gave one more push, so hard that I felt something inside me rip. Out came some poop, but also blood. I was horrified. I remember wondering if anyone else was experiencing such constipation because no one was talking about it, if they were.

Now I know that I was not alone. The National Institutes of Health estimates that 70 million Americans suffer from digestive issues—gas, bloating, heartburn, diarrhea, constipation, and nausea.

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Constipation is one of the most common bowel problems, affecting up to 19% of the US population. From 2006 to 2011, visits to emergency rooms in the US due to constipation increased 42%. That care cost \$1.6 billion in 2011. Dr. Anthony Lembo, a gastroenterologist at

Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center in Boston, says, “Constipation is often thought of as not a serious disease—particularly among doctors. Patients complain about it, but it is not thought of as being medically that relevant.”

Constipation has various causes. #1 is diet, I’m sorry to say since I am such a foodie. Diets that are low in fiber, high in sugar, or high in gluten often cause constipation. Other causes are dehydration; medications like antidepressants, antacids, and blood pressure meds; travel; iron supplementation; laxative abuse; hypothyroidism; irritable bowel syndrome; lack of beneficial bacteria in the colon; and too often ignoring the urge to poop.

Chronic stress, reported by many Americans, has become a major cause of constipation (and other digestive problems). High levels of physical or emotional stress make the body tighten, increasing heart rate and blood pressure and shunting blood away from the midsection into the arms, legs, and head in a fight-or-flight-response. This response is meant to be a temporary way to ensure survival, but when stress becomes chronic, it can wreak havoc on digestive health—decreasing absorption of nutrients, flow to the digestive system of oxygen and blood (fourfold decrease that, in turn, decreases metabolism), and output of enzymes (20,000-fold).

Women seem to suffer from constipation more than men, perhaps due at least in part to the many sources of stress in their daily lives. Women are often reluctant to bring the smell and noise of pooping into public bathrooms, or any bathroom outside their home, and may deliberately hold their poop. Straining during pregnancy commonly causes the enlargement of internal hemorrhoids that cause pain while pooping and may eventually lead to incomplete emptying and chronic constipation.

Severe, chronic constipation is especially dangerous. The body can hold 5-25 pounds of waste, even more in some cases. Natural health expert Richard Anderson, N.D., N.M.D., says, “The intestine can store a vast amount of partially digested, putrefying matter. Some intestines, when autopsied, have weighed up to 40 pounds and were distended to a diameter of 12 inches, with only a pencil-thin channel through which the feces could move. Those 40 pounds were due to caked layers of encrusted mucus, mixed with fecal matter, bizarrely resembling hardened, blackish green truck tire rubber or a piece of dried rawhide.” Dr. Anderson calls this accumulation “mucoid plaque.”

Rumor has it that John Wayne’s autopsy found that his colon weighed 82 pounds at time of death—77 pounds of dried fecal matter and only 5 pounds of living tissue.

In the book *The King and Dr. Nick*, Dr. George Nichopoulos, Elvis Presley’s personal physician for the last 12 years of his life who tried to revive him the day he died, claims that Elvis died from severe constipation, not cardiac arrhythmia. The King’s autopsy revealed a colon that was 5-6 inches in diameter and 8-9 feet long. A normal colon is only 2-3 inches in diameter and 4-5 feet long. The autopsy also found stool that had been in the colon for 4-5 months. Conclusion: The King’s bloated appearance and obesity were due to constipation, not overeating.

Imperfect Pooping: Diarrhea

Diarrhea is an increase in the frequency of bowel movements and change in stool consistency from solid to more liquid. The Bristol Stool Scale characterizes diarrhea as loose stool ranging from soft, fluffy masses to liquid. Diarrhea is caused by the introduction of more fluids into the intestines only that reduces the absorption of fluids.

Diarrhea may be either absolute or chronic. Absolute diarrhea involves more than five bowel movements a day or liquid stools.

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Relative diarrhea involves more bowel movements a day or looser stools than typical for the given individual.

Treatment may include absorbents and anti-motility drugs but should not involve antibiotics.

Complications of diarrhea include dehydration, electrolyte (mineral) imbalance, and dizziness.

Diarrhea is distinguished from four other conditions:

- Incontinence of stool—the inability to control bowel movements until an appropriate time
- Rectal urgency—sudden urge to poop that is so strong it must be answered immediately
- Incomplete evacuation—the sensation that another bowel movement is necessary soon, but passing further stool is difficult
- Bowel movements immediately after eating.

Making Pooping More Perfect

Functional medicine advocates The 4 R Program, a simple approach to address problems like constipation and diarrhea.

Remove foods and drinks that inflame the intestine, such as alcohol, coffee, wheat, and sugar. A comprehensive stool analysis can determine whether parasites, yeast, or bacteria are contributing to the problem.

Replace the good bacteria that are essential for proper digestion and absorption. Adding digestive enzymes and hydrochloric acid may help.

Reinoculate by reinforcing the beneficial bacteria with probiotics and prebiotics.

Repair by providing nutrients that help the gut repair itself—L-glutamine,(amino acid) and slippery elm (herb).

The 4 R Program often requires changes in both diet and life style.

Dietary changes

“The doctors of the future will no longer treat the human frame with drugs, but rather prevent disease with nutrition.”

Thomas Edison

Foods to avoid

- Large amounts of salt, meat and poultry
- Wheat products
- Processed sugar

Foods to include

- Vegetables—steamed, baked, or raw—because the fiber will help push food through the intestines. But in treating diarrhea avoid raw vegetables that can exacerbate the problem because they can be hard to digest.
- Sea vegetables because they are rich in minerals.
- Berries because they do not contain too much sugar.
- Fermented foods and drinks because they provide the good bacteria needed to digest and assimilate nutrients (as they have done for thousands of years.)
- Raw garlic because it is healing and anti-microbial.

Treatment of diarrhea also benefits from drinking probiotic beverages and bone broth (it has an amino acid that helps repair the gut wall) and consuming L-glutamine (an amino acid that research has found helps heal the gut mucosa).

Dr. Carolyn Dean, author of *The Magnesium Miracle*, recommends consuming adequate magnesium (a mineral that most Americas

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seriously lack, according to Dr. Dean). Benefits of magnesium include:

- Better muscle function and parathyroid function
- Reduced insomnia, constipation, heart attacks, hypertension, migraines, and kidney stones
- Relief of symptoms of menopause and PMS.

Life style changes

Several simple life style changes can also help to make pooping more perfect:

- Massage the abdomen for 3 minutes a day to stimulate peristaltic contractions and ease stress
- Exercise regularly and vigorously to train the muscles, including the colon, and encourage elimination
- Have acupuncture, used for thousands of years to improve the digestive function by directing digestive energy and promoting the absorption of nutrients and the elimination of waste
- Practice deep breathing to reduce stress and blood pressure, strengthen the abdominal and intestinal muscles, relieve general body aches and pains, improve blood flow, and release toxins from the body.